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## Teacher attitudes and the reading achievement of English language learners

Sandra Magdalena Ahumada-Penaloza

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TEACHER ATTITUDES AND THE READING ACHIEVEMENT  
OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education:  
Bilingual/Cross-Cultural Education

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by  
Sandra Magdalena Ahumada-Penalzoa

June 2002

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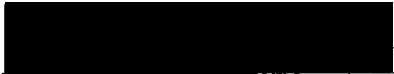
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by  
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June 2002

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## ABSTRACT

Most educators in the United States are members of the dominant culture. Their culture, training, and ideologies as teachers are important factors that contribute to positive or negative perceptions of their students that are English Language Learners. The problem is that teachers may have negative attitudes towards English Language Learners because of lack of knowledge on how to teach them. How are teacher's attitudes toward English Language Learners related to the academic achievement of English Language Learners? The study is a quantitative action research project that includes an attitudinal questionnaire, which utilizes a Lykert scale. The data analyzed is from the attitudinal questionnaire and/or from the participating teachers' student's scores on the SAT 9 Reading test for 1999 and 2000. The unit of analysis will be the correlation between the results of the attitudinal questionnaire items and the measure of growth over time as indicated by the levels of academic achievement of the English Language Learners. The subjects of the study were twenty elementary school teachers who were given the attitudinal questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of questions regarding their perceptions of the achievement and abilities of English

Language Learners in comparison to other students. Each teacher's SAT 9 Reading scores were averaged using five categories: 1) E.L.L., 2) Non-E.L.L., 4) White, and 5) Other. The purpose of these averages was to note if there was any correlation with the responses of the questionnaire that compare the abilities of English Language Learners to the other groups in the classroom with the SAT 9 Reading scores.

The teachers in the study for the most part believe English Language Learners struggle in reading, are faced with many academic challenges, require more time in terms of the lessons that are planned for them, do not do well on standardized assessments, do not perform well on assessments, and are usually not found in the in the higher reading groups.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Dr. Nena Torrez

I would like to thank you for believing that I had the ability to carry out this study. Your dedication to the education of English Language Learners is inspirational. I am grateful for every minute you spent answering all my questions. I maximized my potential working with you and I reached goals I didn't believe I was capable of reaching.

To My Wonderful Husband,

You have been so supportive of my education and been behind me every step of the way. You took excellent care of our boys when I had to go to class and you entertained them when I had assignments. You never complained about the amount of time that I spent on my thesis. I thank you for being so positive and always giving me hope even when I was feeling overwhelmed. As a teacher yourself, you know and understand how important language minority students are to me.

To my children

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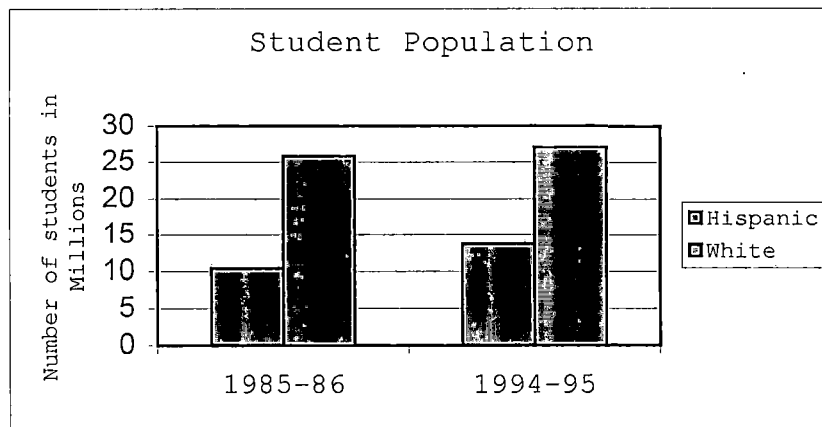


## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

A large number of students who are English Language Learners (E.L.L) currently attend schools in California. The College Board and the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education published a report in 1991 on the growing diversity of the public school student bodies in U.S. schools. This report indicated that the U.S. Nonwhite and Hispanic student population would increase from 10.4 million in 1985-86 to 13.7 million in 1994-1995. The enrollment of White students, meanwhile would rise by only 5 percent, from 25.8 million to 27 million, and its share of the students would drop from 71 percent to 66 percent in 1994-95 (1991, p. 68).

Table 1. Student Population



This report suggests that in the year 2000 our schools were educating 6 million students who had limited proficiency in English. By the year 2026, the number will approximate 15 million limited English proficient students. It is evident that in the future it will be almost impossible for a professional educator to work in a public or private school system in which the students are not racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse. The increasing numbers of linguistically diverse students will challenge today's educators and educators of the future.

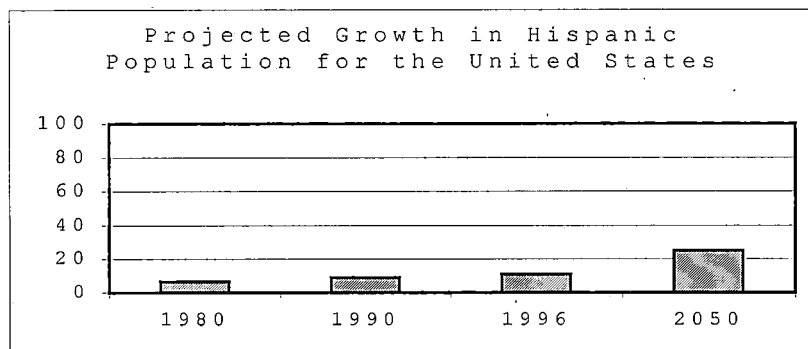
The number and variety of language minority students has escalated tremendously in the past two decades. In 1994, the number of language minority students was estimated 9.9 million (Wagonner, 1994, p. 24). The number of students who are English Language Learners has grown dramatically and there may be negative consequences for their academic achievement if placed in monolingual English classrooms. ELL students represent about 7.3 percent of all public school students, and the vast majority spend most or part of the their days in monolingual English classrooms.

The methods that are used to teach language minority students must be looked at closely. The term "language minority student" symbolizes the fact that although they

may speak one or two languages other than English, English is the dominant language in the United States and any other language is perceived as less valuable. Often times when the term "language minority" or "English Language Learner" is used the student that is envisioned is one that comes from Mexico. The term embraces all racial/ethnic groups that immigrate to United States. It is often easily forgotten that Latin Americans, Asians, and Europeans also immigrate to this country.

The largest numbers of new immigrants are now from Asia and Latin America. For example, in 1980, the percentage of Hispanic origin residents in the United States was just 6.4 percent, but by 1990 it had grown to 9 percent and by 1996 to 10.7 percent. It is estimated that Hispanics will make up a quarter of the U.S. population by 2050.

Table 2. Projected Growth in Hispanic Population for the United States



There are important issues in the educational system in the United States concerning the relationships among race, class, gender and cultural diversity. It is still quite apparent that the United States continues to struggle with of racism (Weinberg, 1990), classism (Nieto, 1992), and sexism (Weis, 1988). In each of these cases the basis for discrimination is that those of one race, social class, or gender are either inherently superior or inferior. The fact that "students of one race, class, or gender are overrepresented in less challenging curricula (through the use of tracking or classroom grouping) and have consistently high dropout rates, poor attendance, and of course low achievement can be seen as potentially related to racism, classism, or sexism (Garcia, 1988, p. 78). Many of our students will come to school with personal family situations that are educationally disadvantageous. These students will need to be in a classroom with a teacher who can understand their primary language. The attitude towards these students on the part of their teachers can set the tone for a positive or negative context for learning. There is a body of research that supports the idea that failure to believe in the promotion of primary language development by the teacher can be related to the academic achievement of the student (Garcia, 1988, p. 84).

The demographic information indicates that the diversity in our schools is a recent, explosive, and long-term phenomenon. Teachers who received their training ten to fifteen years ago were not faced with the challenges that current credential candidates are faced with. Indeed, a decade or two ago relatively few individuals of minority status succeeded academically, with the result that even now the make-up of the teaching profession does not match the demographics of the students it serves. According to the National Center for Statistics, for the 1995-96 school year, over 88 percent of the public and private school teachers and 103,000 school administrators were White. Less than 12 percent were nonwhite and Hispanic: 8 percent were African-American, and only 3 percent were Hispanic, and less than 1 percent were American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Asian or Pacific Islander (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], 1996).

English language learners need teachers who are knowledgeable about the children that they are teaching and they must be willing to learn more about their students' cultures, backgrounds and languages in order to make their educational experience meaningful. A student's positive experience with schooling first begins to take

place in the classroom. If the student feels motivated to learn it will be reflected by his/her scores on academic achievement tests. When students feel alienated and rejected by the teacher they are less likely to be motivated to achieve. In the following sub-sections I will give the descriptions of the background, problem, and research questions for my study.

### Background to the Study

The students who are English Language Learners will grow-up one day to become adult members of society. The students are not going to disappear and they need to be taught the skills that are essential in order to become productive members of this society. The amount of effort the teacher puts into trying to be competent, knowledgeable, and sensitive to the needs of the students will make a difference in their educational outcomes. The students will either become the teachers, doctors, lawyers, and professionals of the future or the main source of uneducated manual labor. The attitude teachers have towards their students can make a difference in the type of educational goals that these students establish for themselves.

The issue of labeling is key in this situation. Rumbaut found that self-esteem of immigrant students is linked to how they are labeled in their schools. Specifically, he found that students' self-esteem is diminished when they are labeled "Limited English Proficient" (Rumbaut, 1996).

Given the dramatic increase in the number of ELL students in the United States in the past three decades, every classroom in every city and town has already been, or will soon be affected. The responsibility for educating language minority students cannot be placed on the shoulders of teachers who have training in bilingual education and/or English as Second Language. The responsibility is that of all teachers and all schools. Most teachers have had little or no training in language related areas. Even in bilingual classrooms, only 10 percent of teachers serving ELL students are certified in bilingual education (August & Hakuta, 1998).

#### The Problem

The attitudes of teachers towards E.L.L. students can help to create a positive learning environment in which these students' potential can be maximized. A negative attitude towards E.L.L. students can be problematic in the

sense that it is going to effect the amount of effort that the teachers put into teaching these students. This dynamic extends to most other non-English primary language students. When the teacher does not speak Spanish and the student does not speak English a barrier is automatically created between the two. This should not be the case between the teacher and his/her students. Teachers and their students must have a personal relationship in order to make the most of the school year. Students should not feel alienated from access to education. All students should feel included and accepted in the educational system. Students spend enormous amounts of time with their teachers in school and in order for there to be success there should be no barriers that come between the teacher and his/her students. How are teachers' attitudes towards E.L.L. students related to their academic achievement?

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem is that teachers may have negative attitudes towards E.L.L. children because of a lack of knowledge on how to teach E.L.L. students.

- 1) How are teachers' attitudes towards E.L.L. students related to the academic achievement of E.L.L. students?



### Definition of Terms

- 1) Teachers - Teachers of E.L.L. students who have either a Basic, CLAD, BCLAD, Out of State or Ryan credential. They teach grades first through fourth.
- 2) English Language Learners - Students who are not proficient in English based on the results of the Individual Placement Test (I.P.T.)
- 3) Bilingual Education - Education that provides students from a different language and culture with the tools necessary to gain entry into the mainstream society without having to give up the language and the values of their homes. It provides primary language support in order to transfer the knowledge from the native language into the mainstream language.
- 4) Attitude - Positive or negative feeling towards a specific group of students. A positive attitude implies promoting a social environment that provides equal access to learning and high expectations for achievement. A negative attitude suggests a pessimistic outlook concerning the achievement of students.

- 5) English Language Learner (ELL) - Student identified as non-proficient in English based on (a) the use of a language other than English at home; (b) an English-language assessment by the school; and (c) low academic performance in English.
- 6) Achievement - Measurement of the extent of learning competency in a content domain for program and curriculum evaluation or certification of competence.
- 7) SAT 9 Test - State exam administered at the end of every academic school year.
- 8) Classism - Discriminatory beliefs and behaviors based on differences in social class; generally directed against those from poor and/or working-class backgrounds.
- 9) Culture - The values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldview created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and/or religion.

- 10) Communication - A combination of verbal and nonverbal systems that enables humans to encode meaning and transmit it to others.
- 11) Curriculum - The area of schooling that addresses the content of instruction.
- 12) Affect - A term used in psychology to refer to people's feelings and emotions as distinguished from their thoughts and actions.
- 13) Ethnic - A general term used to refer to groups of people who are differentiated by race, religion, nationality, and/or region of origin.
- 14) Language Minority Student - A student characterized by substantive participation in a non-English-speaking social environment, which has acquired the normal communicative abilities of that social environment on a regular basis only during the formal school process.
- 15) Minority - A group that is subordinate to another dominant group and that is subject to a negative power relationship.

## Theoretical Framework

Persell asked, "why do teachers hold lower expectations for lower class or minority students?" He believed that there are four possibilities:

1. Teachers have certain personality traits that predispose them to have lower expectations for certain children.
2. Teachers are exposed to certain socializing experiences and societal prejudices.
3. Educational concepts, such as those concerning IQ and cultural deficits, influence teacher expectations.
4. Educational structures, including tracking, affect teacher expectations. (Persell, 1977, p. 101)

Persell believes educational inequality is the cause of economic inequality. The absolute amount of inequality in educational attainment has declined in the last 50 years as the compulsory education age has risen and as educational opportunities have expanded, both in the United States and Western Europe (Persell, 1977, p. 3). Although there has been a reduction of educational inequality, it has not resulted in less economic inequality in the United States. Persell believed an adequate relationship between education and inequality needs to integrate all four levels of analysis: the societal, the institutional, interpersonal, and intrapsychic.

On the societal level the primary basis of inequality is the difference in ownership and control of productive resources. In addition, there is a hierarchy of occupational statuses and a caste system based upon race and sex. The wealth, occupational, and racial structures of dominance are legitimated largely by a societal ideology of merit, competition, and social mobility as mediated through the educational system.

The ideology of merit stresses that education should provide the equal opportunity to attain a high-status occupation. This idea is based on the assumption that a person's talent and effort are directly related to success, both in school and outside of school. This notion places the opportunity for success on the shoulders of the individual rather than the institution or society. According to this notion, everyone has the equal opportunity and choice to succeed or fail. This idea is pervasive in scientific research and amongst the community of educators. Instead of looking at differential school success as a consequence of societal or institutional inequality, the IQ-deficit theory and the cultural-deficit theory have been accepted as a reasonable explanation for the difference in success for children of color.

The Deficit theories are theories that hypothesize that some people are deficient in intelligence and/or achievement either because of genetic inferiority (because of their racial background) or because of cultural deprivation (because of their cultural background and/or because they have been deprived of cultural experiences and activities deemed by the majority to be dispensable for growth and development (Nieto, 1992, p. 390)

The utilization of intelligence testing in the schools historically has played a part in the perpetuation of underachievement of bicultural students or students of color. IQ measures have consistently been used as a means to secure acceptance of an individual's allotted place in society; and in this respect, IQ testing has functioned clearly as a political enterprise of the dominant culture (Hudson, 1972, p. 14).

Material and social conditions influence the institutional level. Schools generally diminish the power and control of all children who attend them, but there are systematic differences among children in the power and the control they experience the educational environments. The difference may be economic meaning the resources they receive. It can also be political in terms of the influence their parents have on the educational process.

It can be ecological meaning where they go to school and with whom. It can be interpersonal, the expectations teachers hold for them. It can also be bureaucratic which essentially means their failure rate. Children may experience different authority relations or different societal relations in the schools they attend (Persell, 1977, p. 12).

On the interpersonal level, teachers form expectations of children based directly upon race and social class, but their expectations are also influenced by pupil test scores, appearance, language style, speed of task performance, and behavior characteristics which are themselves culturally defined and related to relative position in the structure of dominance. When such traits are not related to the teacher's expectations, it is noticed that often the experimental manipulation (whether of race, social class, or IQ) may appear obvious to teachers (Persell, 1977, p. 112). Teacher expectations are more influenced by negative information about pupil characteristics than by positive data. This is a particularly interesting finding since so much of the information teachers receive about low-income and minority children seems to be negative. The negative information can come from various sources such as cum files, previous

teachers, speech or special education teachers, the school secretary, or other school personnel.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The problem is that teachers may have negative or preconceived attitudes towards English Language Learner (E.L.L.) children because of a lack of knowledge on how to teach linguistically diverse students. In 1996, the National Center of Education and Statistics generated a set of data that reveals that completion of high school is problematic for Nonwhite and Hispanic Students. "The unfortunate result is that by the eighth grade 40 percent or more of Black and Hispanic students are performing one grade level or more below expected and normal achievement levels" (Garcia, 1999, p. 27).

#### Early Studies

The term "self-fulfilling prophecy, coined by Robert Merton in 1948, means that students perform in ways that teachers expect (Merton, 1948, p. 200). The term was not widely used until 1968 when Rosenthal and Jacobson did a classic study that lead to further research on the subject.

The study was structured around the presentation to several classes of children in grades one through six of a nonverbal intelligence test. The researchers called this

intelligence test the "Harvard Test of Influenced Acquisition" its purpose was to measure the students' potential for intellectual growth. Twenty percent of the students chosen by the researchers were randomly selected and labeled "intellectual bloomers" and the names were given to the teachers. The teachers were advised to make note of any signs of intellectual growth. "Overall these children particularly in the lower grades showed considerably gains in IQ during the school year when compared with the other students. They were also rated by their teachers as being more interesting, curious, and happy, and thought to be more likely to succeed later in life (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968, p. 101). As a result of this study the effect of teacher expectations and student achievement has begun to be taken seriously for the first time.

Prior to this research, student failure in school was usually blamed on individual or family circumstances. Now, the possible influence of teachers' attitudes and behaviors and the schools complicity in the process has to be considered as well. The most compelling implications were for the education of those students most seriously disadvantaged by schooling, that is, for the students of color and the poor.

Early research done on teachers' expectations by Rist found that a kindergarten teacher had grouped her class by the eighth day of the school year. Rist noted that the teacher had already roughly constructed an "ideal type" of student, most of whose characteristics were associated with a specific social class. These included socio-economic status, parents' level of education, race, and primary language. By the end of the year it was evident the students had received differential treatment. "The "fast" learners received more teaching time, more reward-directed behavior, and more attention. The interactional patterns between the teacher and her students then took on a "castelike" appearance. (Rist, 1970, p. 301) When teachers' perceive that their students are "dumb" they give them lower level work and less challenging curriculum.

In order to understand the impact of teacher expectations on bicultural students it is important that Persell be mentioned. In 1977 Persell came up with the term "genesis of teacher expectations". The genesis of teacher expectations involves four essential factors which are the societal, institutional, interpersonal, and the intrapsychic. First, is the social context, which incorporates the prevailing social attitudes associated

with race, class structure, and the social, political, and economic ideology. Second, specific pedagogical theories and conceptual frameworks influence teacher expectations, as well as educational structures and practices instilled by their teacher training programs. This category reflects the climate of expectations surrounding testing, tracking, and record keeping. Third, crucial in the development of teacher expectations are the teacher's personal experiences related to race, education, and peer socialization. And fourth, teacher expectations are found to be significantly influenced by the student characteristics such as race, class, appearance, behavior, and test performance (Persell, 1977, p. 132).

In looking at the results of teacher expectations, Rosenbaum places a strong emphasis on the question of how teachers' expectations determine the manner in which they allocate attention in the classroom. He argues that the most important teacher bias is related to this distribution of attention. Teachers report that they prepare more for college-track than non-college track classes, and they felt that lower-track business and general-track classes are so undemanding as to require little or no preparation at all. Lower-track students also report this same form of classroom treatment, noting that

some lower-track teachers give a workbook assignment each day and spend the class time ignoring students and reading the newspaper (Roseanbaum, 1976).

Ryan strongly argues that teacher expectations and the subsequent attention that students receive or fail to receive influence greatly their level of achievement in the classroom. Recent studies have shown that, even when there is little substantial difference in the quantity of interaction between high-expectancy and low-expectancy groups, the qualitative differences are great. With students of whom they hold high expectations, teachers more often praise correct answers or "sustain" the interaction if the answer is incorrect-that is, they repeat or rephrase the question, give a clue, and in general try to get the student to continue to work toward a correct response. On the other hand, with students of whom they expect little, teachers are more inclined to accept correct answers with minimal praise and criticize incorrect answers. In addition, the teacher is much more likely to limit his/her interactions with these students to matters of the class organization and discipline (Ryan, 1981, p. 134).

The studies implied Mexican-American students fail because their social background and cultural environment

limit their achievement potential (De Kanter, 1981, p. 79). Teacher attitudes towards a certain cultural group or groups are closely related to expectations of academic achievement for those students. They found teachers gave preferential treatment to gifted students. "Additionally, it was found this pattern of treatment depended to some extent on the race of the student" (Maehr, 1970, p. 415). A study conducted by the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights found Mexican-American students experienced more interaction with the teacher than Anglo-American students only in two areas: receiving directions and criticizing (McCormick & Noriega, Rubovits, 1986, p.225). The quality of interaction with the teacher and the context of the interactions can make a difference in a student's success in school (Gould, 1981, p. 303).

It suggested that the public school system is exclusive for White, middle class society. Although schools claim to practice cultural pluralism, in reality they are often promoting assimilation. Everyone is supposed to be a part of the mainstream society. According to a study done by Goodlad, "...self-fulfilling prophecy works to socialize children for a hierarchy of work roles and that minority students are socialized to more menial roles" (1984, p. 302).

Students tend to internalize the beliefs teachers have about their abilities. Generally, they "rise or fall to the level of expectations of their teachers...When teachers believe in students, students believe in themselves. When those you respect think you can, YOU think you can" (Raffini, 1983, p.219).

#### Recent Studies

In the more recent studies on teacher expectations it was found that teachers significantly underestimate the achievement gains for Mexican-American students. Rios studied teachers in the Midwest to determine what principles of practice they used for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms. Rios studied sixteen teachers and most of them made negative comments about their students, none of their teaching principles focused on academics, and only one teacher said her students wanted to learn (Rios, 1996). Researchers have found that teachers engage in affirming nonverbal behaviors such as smiling, leaning toward, and making eye contact when they believe they are dealing with high ability students more than when they believe they are interacting with "slow" students (Bamburg, 1999, p. 21).

Students who are perceived as low in ability may be given fewer opportunities to learn new material, asked less stimulating questions, given briefer and less informative feedback, praised less frequently for success, are called on less frequently, given less time to respond than students who are considered high in ability (Cotton, 1989, p. 8). Research has shown teachers' expectations for students tend to be self-fulfilling. Good and Brophy also summarized the literature about the differences between high and low scoring students. They noted that "teachers tend to seat low expectation students together as a group and farther away from the teacher" (1980, p. 230).

According to McCormick and Noriega:

Teacher and student interaction is important and it cannot take place when the student is far away from the teacher. When minority students feel their teachers have low expectations of them, they are more likely to become passive spectators rather than active participants in the educational process and seek other environments in which they can experience a more positive feeling of self worth. (1986, p. 225)

Garcia noted that the focus of most education is the education of the individual student, not the education of his or her ethnic group. This can be problematic in terms of the expectations and perceptions in their interactions with culturally diverse students.



Garcia also noted:

A group-oriented concept may serve to distract the teacher's attention from the student's particular experience of culture-generating processes, in and outside of school. The culture concept adopted by the teacher greatly affects teacher-student interaction. The assumptions a teacher makes about the student's culture, whether right or wrong, may stereotype the student and thus prelude the flexible, realistic, and open-minded teacher student interaction needed for effective instruction. (1999, p. 69)

Stereotyping of students' effects the educational process, which is fundamentally a process of social interaction, with socialization as a primary goal. Vygotsky would go as far as to conclude that all forms of cognition and learning are social and therefore cultural in origin:

Any function in children's cultural development appears twice, or on two planes. First, it appears on the social plane and then on the psychological plane. First, it appears between people as an interpsychological category and then within the individual child as an intra psychological category.... Social relation or relations among people underlie all higher functions and their relationships (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 63). In order for children to achieve academic success, they must have positive interactions with their teachers.

In his research on child development, Cole follows this conceptual framework for understanding culture and human development. He concludes that teachers can be very important in organizing a child's environment so as to enhance the types of social experiences that lead to optimal development. He suggests that "it is the foundation upon which, in an ideal world, the education of children would be organized" (Cole, 1995, p. 111).

Kenneth Zeichner found that, "teacher education students, who are mostly White and monolingual, by and large view diversity as a problem (1995, p. 36). He also found that the effective teachers believe their students have the capability to learn and communicate this message to them. Haberman found similar conclusions in the characteristics of successful teachers of the urban poor. "Successful teachers did not blame students for failure and they had consistently high expectations of their students (1995, p. 779). Fuch, Fuch, and Norris did a study in 1994 that measured teachers' beliefs about the importance of good work habits, teacher planning, and student achievement using a nine-item scale. One hundred twenty-one general educators in grades first through sixth participated in the study. The results indicated that teachers with high standards and strong beliefs about the

importance of good student work habits and classroom behavior reported planning more responsively for individual student performance and affected greater student achievement (Fuch, Fuch, & Norris, 1994, p. 341). Teachers who hold stronger beliefs about the importance of work habits and classroom behavior also appear to practice better instructional methods and effect better achievement in spite of perceived differences among learner capabilities.

Fine has reported research findings in which Teacher disempowerment correlated highly with disparaging attitudes toward students; that is, the more powerless teachers feel, the more negatively they feel towards their students as well. In contrast, teachers who feel they have autonomy in their classrooms and with their curriculum, generally also have high expectations of their students (Fine, 1993).

Recent research summarized by the U.S. Department of Education in 1998 and August and Hakuta in 1997 has documented what seems to work. They looked at educationally effective practices with linguistically and culturally diverse students in selected preschools, elementary, and high school classrooms throughout the United States. The results show that teachers from these

classrooms were highly committed to the educational success of their students. They perceive themselves as instructional motivators utilizing "new" learning theories and instructional philosophies to guide their practice. Most of these teachers were involved in professional development activities such as small group support networks with other educators. They had a strong, demonstrated belief in the importance of communication between the school and the home. They had high academic expectations for all their students ("everyone will learn to read in my classroom") and served as advocates for their students. They rejected any suggestion that their students were intellectually or academically disadvantaged (Hakuta & August, 1997).

#### Summary

For a long time public schools in the United States and their employees have considered the unique language development of culturally diverse children as a limitation. The social attributes of these children's families and home environments likewise have been viewed as detrimental to the student's social, economic, and educational success (Garcia, 1999, p. 127).

Recent research has destroyed the stereotypes and myths about the educational needs of culturally and/or linguistically diverse students. A new understanding of culturally and linguistically diverse students is needed. No one set of descriptors is specific or appropriate for all students of a given cultural background. In both early and recent studies, there is an agreement that E.L.L. students need equal access to education and curriculum. Some teachers appear to have positive attitudes in regard to their respect for the students' culture and background. Cultural pluralism appears to be being encouraged. When achievement is related to the attitudes of the teacher, teachers tend to alienate themselves by not taking any of the blame for the failure of their E.L.L. students in the school setting. There is a strong push for the idea of blending in with the dominant culture and becoming a part of the mainstream society.

Teachers who are not familiar with the culture and language of their students have the most difficulty knowing what to expect of their students (Gault, 1987). If teachers are confused in regards to the academic capabilities of their students, Mexican-American students tend to get labeled as less intelligent, and as less capable of success. Teachers need a new understanding of

the part they can play in children's educational success. Teachers often blame families and cultures for the failure to provide the language development and cite a lack of motivation on the part of the students and their families. Teachers are the holders of knowledge and knowledge is power in this society. "Low expectations, over reliance on testing, and lack of academic preparation create attitudinal postures that lead to academic neglect" (Chavez & Chavez, 1996, p. 24).

The curriculum should be include and celebrate the cultural background of Mexican-American and all other students who are a part of the "classroom culture". Positive teacher interaction is necessary in order for students to achieve success. Students who do not interact with their teachers are denied access to learning, and in turn access to academic success.

August and Hakuta (1997) comprehensively reviewed schools and classrooms in which linguistically and culturally diverse students have achieved high academic performance. Through their analysis of some 33 case studies, they identified the following factors as contributing to the students' success: a supportive school-wide climate, school leadership, a customized learning environment, articulation and coordination within

and between schools, use of native language and culture in instruction, a balanced curriculum that includes both basic and higher-order skills, explicit skills instruction, opportunities for student-directed instruction, use of instructional strategies that enhance understanding, opportunities for practice, systematic student assessment, staff development, and home and parent involvement (p. 171).

Most educators in the United States are members of the dominant culture. Their culture, training, and ideologies as teachers are important factors that contribute to positive or negative perceptions of their E.L.L. students.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

Design: The study is a quantitative action research project that includes an attitudinal questionnaire, which utilizes a Lykert scale.

Data: The data analyzed is from the attitudinal questionnaires and/or from these participating teachers student scores on the SAT 9 Reading scores for 1999 and 2000. The unit of analysis will be the correlation between the results of the attitudinal questionnaire and the measure of growth over time as indicated by the levels of academic achievement of the E.L.L. students.

Subjects: Twenty elementary school teachers were given the attitudinal questionnaire. The SAT 9 Reading scores were used to measure the academic reading achievement of the students.

Methodology: The questionnaire given to the teachers consisted of questions, the responses display the information.

The Sat 9 reading scores for the years 1999 and 2000 are being used to measure the amount of student achievement. The results of these tests and the results of the questionnaire will be used to note if there is any



correlation between teachers' attitudes and the amount of academic success the student had based on the Sat 9 reading test scores. Each teachers' Sat 9 Reading scores will be averaged using five categories: 1) E.L.L., 2) Non-E.L.L, 3) Latino, 4) White, 5) Other. The purpose of these averages is to note if there is any correlation to the responses of the questionnaire that compare the abilities of E.L.L. to the other groups in the classroom to the SAT 9 Reading scores.

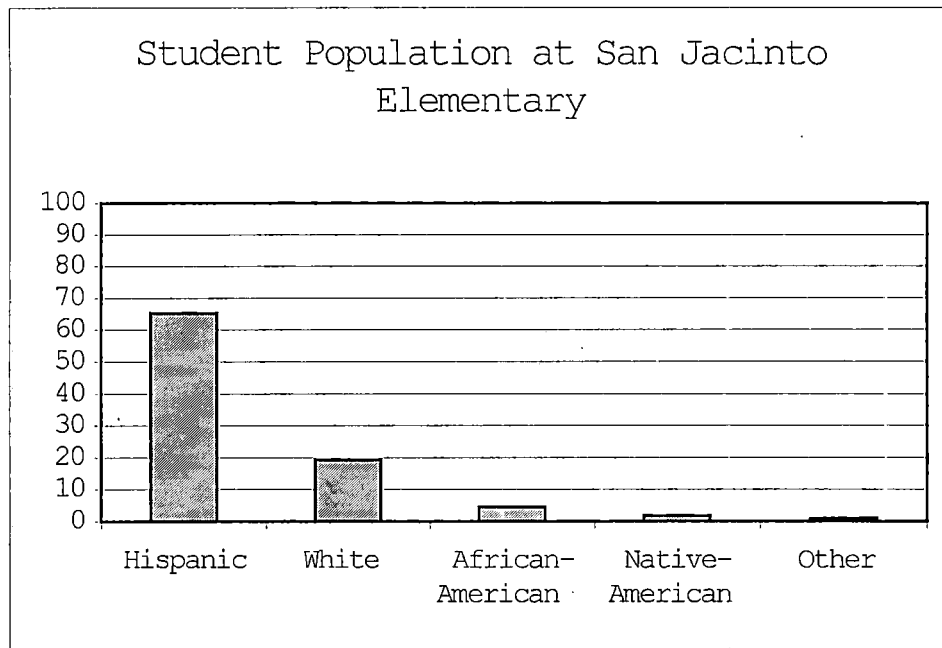
Data Collected: The questionnaires were collected from twenty elementary teachers. The SAT 9 reading scores were collected for the 1999 and 2000 school years.

Type of Analysis: The data has been analyzed by making note of the positive or negative correlation between the teacher's attitudes towards E.L.L. students and their academic achievement during 1999 and 2000.

Demographics:

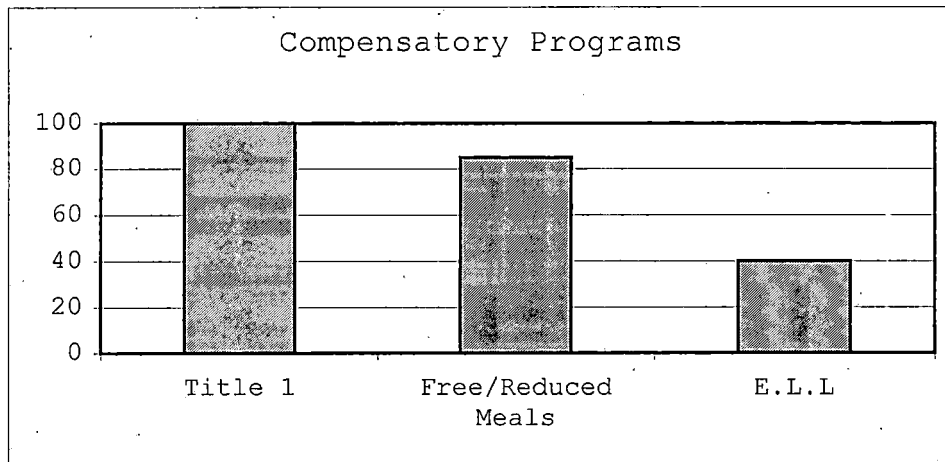
San Jacinto Elementary is located in the San Jacinto valley in Riverside County. It is a small rural community composed of a variety of ethnic backgrounds that include, white, Latino, African-American, Native-American, and Asian. San Jacinto provides year round services for six hundred students from grades K-4.

Table 3. Student Population at San Jacinto Elementary



All students are served by a school-wide Title 1 Program of these students. Forty percent receive services for English Language learners and eighty-five percent receive free/reduced meals.

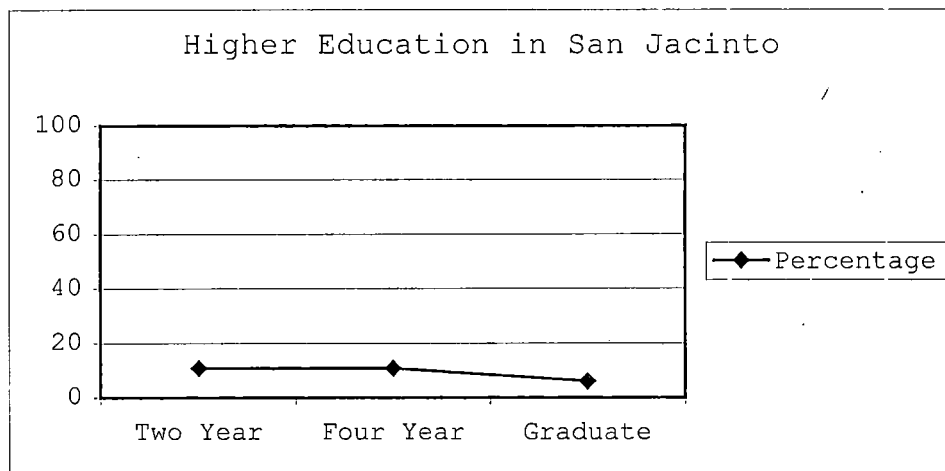
Table 4. Compensatory Programs



The total population for San Jacinto is 23,779. Forty percent of those are Hispanic. Of those 23,779 people, 8,056 of them are between the ages of 0-18 years of age. This town has to or will have to service 8,056 students in their schools. If the trend school aged children follows the ethnicity trend, then almost half of the school-aged children will be Hispanic. The median household income is \$13,327. The high school graduation rate is 68.06%.

Eleven percent of the people in San Jacinto have two-year college degrees. Eleven percent of the people in San Jacinto have four-year college degrees. Only six percent have graduate degrees.

Table 5. Higher Education in San Jacinto



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

#### Analysis of Data

Each teacher was given the attitudinal questionnaire containing a section that requires demographic data. The questionnaire contains nineteen questions on a Lykert scale dealing with perceptions and attitudes towards E.L.L. students. The responses to the key questions were analyzed in order to find patterns of responses that reflected positive or negative perceptions or attitudes specifically towards Mexican-American students' academic achievement in the area of reading. The responses were cross-referenced with the demographic data that was provided by the participants in the study. The questions were focused on were the following:

- 1) E.L.L. students struggle in reading
- 2) E.L.L. students need extra help in most areas
- 3) E.L.L. students are faced with many academic challenges
- 4) Lessons for E.L.L. students require more preparation on the part of the teacher
- 5) E.L.L. students have a wide variety of academic abilities

- 6) E.L.L. students are usually behind in most academic areas
- 7) E.L.L. students do well on standardized tests
- 8) E.L.L. students perform as well on assessments as the regular students
- 9) E.L.L. students are usually found in the higher reading groups
- 10) E.L.L. students are capable of academic success

The students in each of the participants' classrooms will be divided into sub groups. The categories represented will be E.L.L., Anglo-Saxon, Non-E.L.L., and Other. The "Non-E.L.L." includes students who were identified E.L.L. at one time according to the Language Survey, but have been redesignated. The "Other" sub group includes students who Native-American, African-American, or any other ethnicity. The average reading scores for those groups will be compared with the level of academic reading achievement based on the SAT 9 test for the 1999 and 2000 academic school years.

The teaching experience of the participants in this study ranged from two to thirty-three years. Four out of seventeen of the participants speak Spanish. Only two of those four who speak Spanish are fluent speakers of Spanish. The two participants that speak Spanish fluently

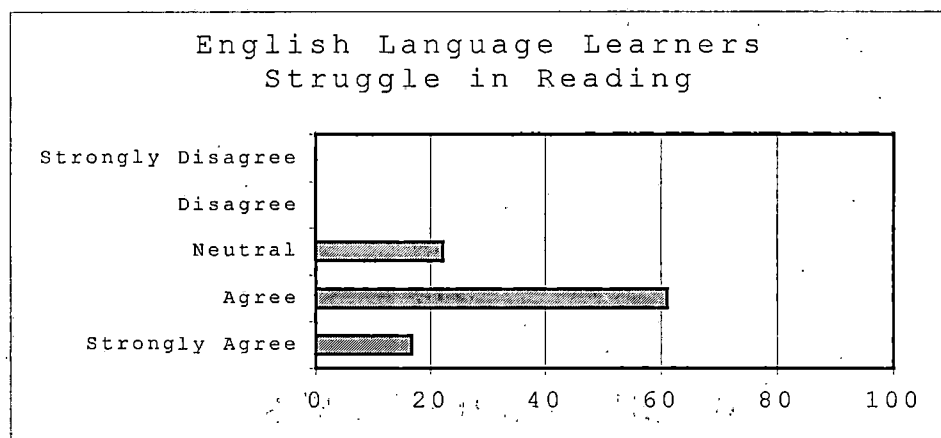
are also the ones that have a BCLAD credential. One of the participants whom has a BCLAD is Peruvian and the other is White. Eleven of them hold CLAD credentials and the other five teachers are not currently in the process of attaining CLAD certification.

### Results

The first question to be analyzed is the following:

- 1) E.L.L. students struggle in reading

Table 6. English Language Learners Students Struggle in Reading

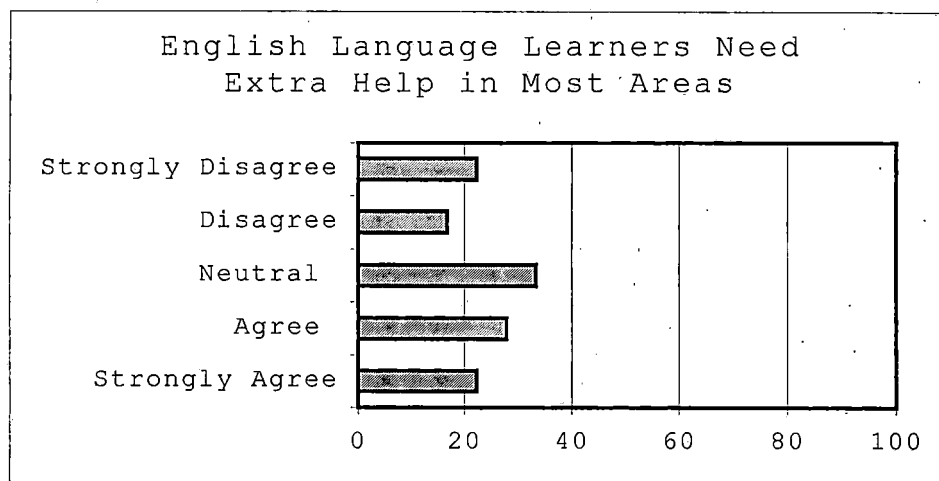


Seventy-eight percent of the teachers agree or strongly agree that E.L.L. students struggle in reading. The response to this question can be viewed as a negative perspective about the potential strengths in reading of E.L.L. students. Successful readers are more likely to

enjoy academic success in school. If seventy-eight of teachers believe that E.L.L. students struggle in reading, then what are their chances for success in the other areas? Reading is a skill in any given language. What causes E.L.L. students to struggle in reading? Is it perhaps that they have not developed enough academic language and vocabulary skills to enable them to be more successful in reading in English. It may be a possibility that the teachers that were surveyed believe they struggle in reading because of their accent. It may be that the E.L.L. students, who failure to pronounce words correctly, give the teacher the notion that they are struggling in reading. In many cases students who struggle a bit to decode or have a slight accent, actually have far more precise comprehension than those students who read fluently without an accent in the English language. Two of the teachers who agreed that E.L.L. students struggle in reading had average reading scores for E.L.L. students above the 50th percentile.



Table 7. English Language Learners Need Extra Help in Most Areas



The second question to be analyzed is the following:

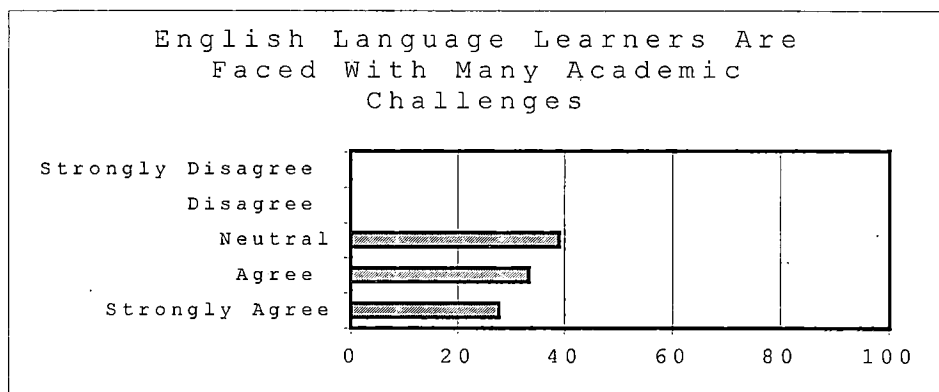
2) E.L.L. students need extra help in most academic areas. Half of the teachers agree or strongly agree that E.L.L. students need extra help in most academic areas. This response notes some concern for the academic achievement of E.L.L. students. Half of the teachers believe E.L.L. students need help in all the academic areas which means that they perceive that E.L.L. students are academically challenged. Half of the teachers believe that they will have difficulty not just in reading but in everything else. This does not give the E.L.L. students much hope to be successful in reading or any of the other subjects for

that matter. For half of them, the acronym E.L.L. is closely related to struggle and failure.

The third question to be analyzed is the following:

2) English Language Learners are faced with many academic challenges

Table 8. English Language Learners are Faced with Many Academic Challenges



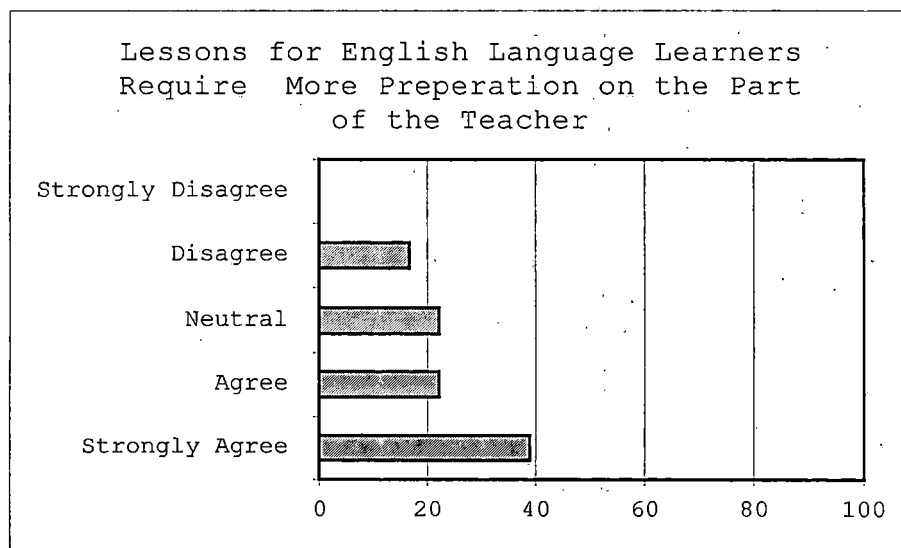
Sixty-one percent of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that E.L.L. students are faced with many challenges. There is a notion that E.L.L. students have many obstacles to overcome. The question, "Which obstacles?" comes to mind when looking at the results of this question. Many obstacles come to mind when looking at this question. Learning a new language without support in the primary language can be an obstacle. Being put in a classroom with a teacher who is not trained in how to work

with E.L.L. students can be an obstacle. The barriers of communication in terms of language between the E.L.L. child's parents and teacher may also be an obstacle. Placing the E.L.L. child in the "sink or swim" method of acquisition of the English language can be a detrimental obstacle. Believing that the E.L.L. student is most likely going to fail is also an obstacle. In most of the obstacles mentioned, the E.L.L. student has no control. He or she is at the mercy of his or her educators and of the educational system itself.

The fourth question to be analyzed is the following:

4) Lessons for E.L.L. students require more preparation on the part of the teacher.

Table 9. Lessons for English Language Learners Require More Preparations on the Part of the Teacher



Sixty-one percent of the teachers strongly agree or agree that they need to prepare more for E.L.L. students' lessons. This question can be looked at in two ways. Lessons for E.L.L. students require more time if they are prepared thoughtfully keeping in mind the multiple levels of language development and the varied needs of E.L.L. students. Two of the respondents that strongly agreed that lessons for E.L.L. students require more preparation on the part of the teacher, had average reading scores for E.L.L. students that were above the 50th percentile. Do these two teachers have higher scores because they are putting more time and effort into planning lessons that are beneficial to E.L.L. students? Could it be that they are keeping in mind the needs of their students? It can also be interpreted as a negative response. Sixty-one percent of the teachers believe they need to prepare more for lessons for E.L.L. students and may be resentful or upset about it.

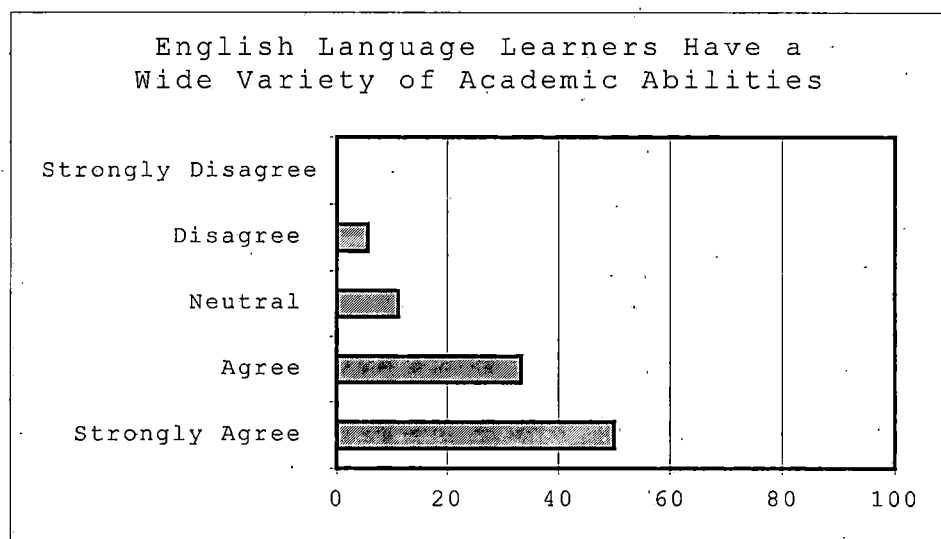
If sixty-one percent of teachers feel that lessons for E.L.L. students require more time, then more time is equivalent to more work on their part. Teachers may not be happy about anything that requires them to add more work to their demanding workload. A teacher who is bitter about having to do more work is not going to have a very

positive regard for the E.L.L. students. It would almost make them upset at the child for not being fluent in English. This may create the notion of "What am I supposed to do with this kid?" or "He doesn't understand a thing I say to him". This may cause the teacher to alienate the child to the point where the child may become invisible in the classroom.

The fifth question to be analyzed is the following:

5) E.L.L. students have a wide variety of academic abilities.

Table 10. English Language Learners Have a Wide Variety of Academic Abilities



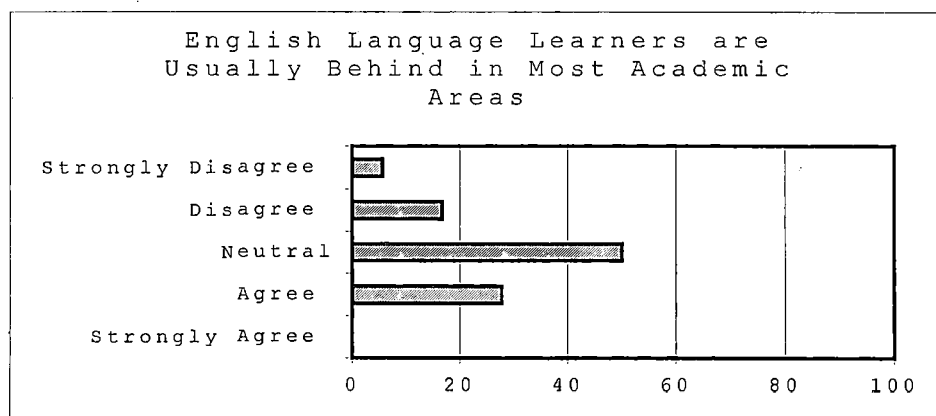
Eighty-three percent of the teachers agree or strongly agree that E.L.L. students have a wide variety of

academic abilities. This response has a positive connotation. This response indicates most of teachers believe that E.L.L. students are diverse and represent a range of capabilities. Yet in response to question #3, Sixty-one percent of the teachers believed that E.L.L. students are faced with many academic challenges. It seems that the teachers feel that the students have a variety of abilities but they must overcome all of the academic challenges that they face.

The sixth question being analyzed is the following:

6) E.L.L. students are usually behind in most academic areas.

Table 11. English Language Learners are Usually Behind in Most Academic Areas



Twenty-eight percent of the teachers agree that E.L.L. students are usually behind in most academic areas.

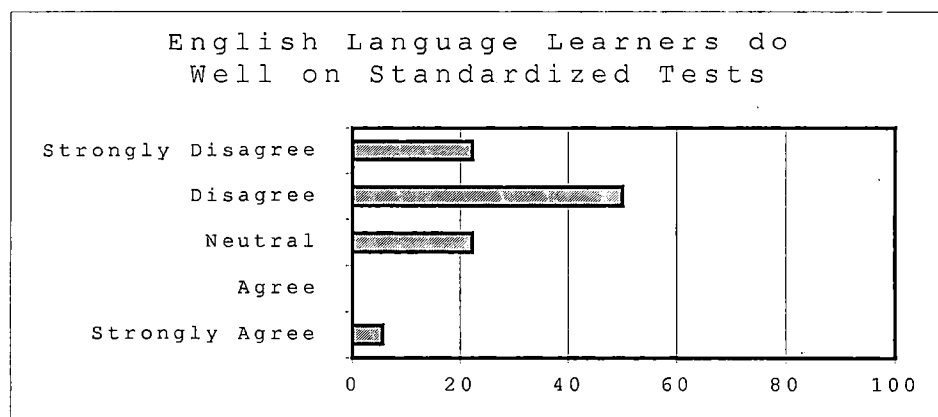
Thirty-three percent had a neutral response which means they were not sure if they were behind in most areas or not behind. The response to #5 leads one to believe that some E.L.L. students may be very capable of success, yet when you look at question #6, 28% of the teachers felt that as a group, E.L.L students are behind in most academic areas. As a group, E.L.L. students are not viewed as capable of academic achievement in the area of reading. When teachers perceive that an entire group of children are incapable, it is problematic because any child who belongs to group is automatically devalued. Belonging to a group that is perceived to have difficulty can be a negative barrier in the educational system. This means that if Asian students, as a group, are perceived to do well in Math it may be quite beneficial to each Asian student. The Asian student that belongs to the group which is stereotyped, as being "intelligent" will only benefit from that positive perception. The Asian student will walk into a classroom and automatically be perceived as "intelligent". The teacher will most likely challenge the student, stand closer, allow more time for responses, repeat information, slow-down when it seems that the student is not understanding, and cater more to that student.

It would be interesting to research further into what exactly are the abilities of E.L.L. students according to the respondents. They are not considered to be strong readers, are behind in most academic areas, require more preparation time of the teacher, do not do well on standardized tests, and are faced with many academic challenges. When the results of the other questions are looked at, it appears that they are out of the competition in terms of their possibilities of success.

The seventh question being analyzed is the following:

7) E.L.L. students do well on standardized tests.

Table 12. English Language Learners Students do Well on Standardized Tests



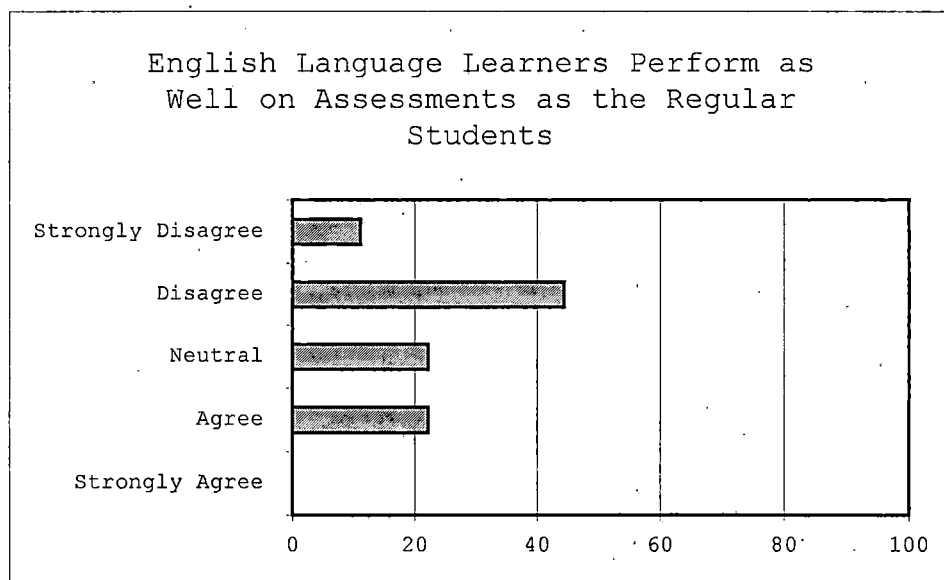
Seventy-two percent of the respondents strongly disagree or disagree that E.L.L. students do well on standardized tests. They do not believe E.L.L. students,



as a group, do well on standardized tests. It was interesting to look at the average reading scores of all of the sub groups. E.L.L. students did not do worse than any of the other sub groups. The scores were all very close to each other without significant higher scores for the dominant sub group. Teachers have this notion that E.L.L. students do worse on standardized tests than Non-E.L.L. students, and the truth is that it is not the case. In some classes, the E.L.L. students scored higher than the other sub groups. In other classes the scores were almost the same. In some classes the average score of the E.L.L. students was one to three percent lower, which is not a significant difference. One of the respondents who disagreed that E.L.L. students do not do well on standardized tests did not have any E.L.L. students who scored below the 30th percentile. Twelve percent of her E.L.L. students scored above the 50th percentile.

8) E.L.L. students perform as well on assessments as the regular students.

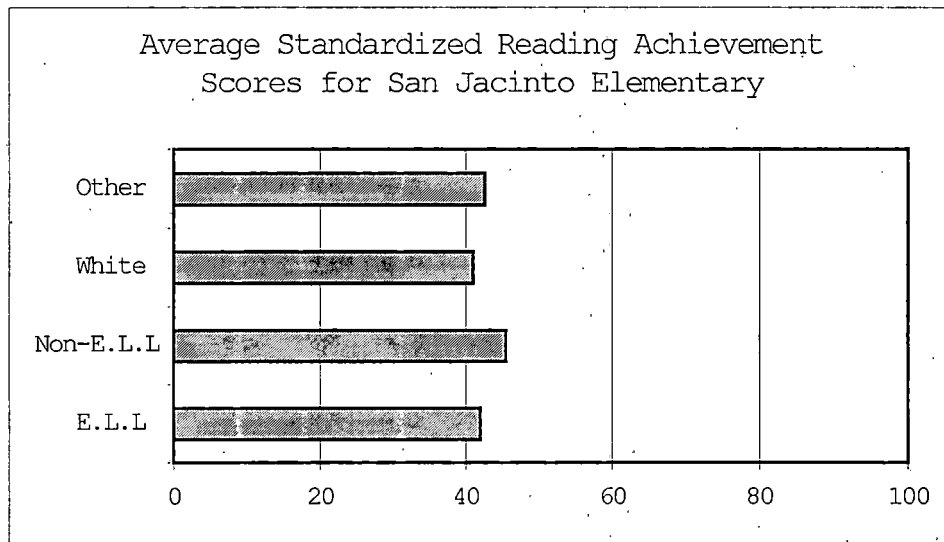
Table 13. English Language Learners Perform as Well on Assessments as the Regular Students



Fifty-six percent of the respondents strongly disagree or disagree that E.L.L. students perform as well on assessments as the regular students. They believe that the regular students, being the Non-E.L.L., Anglo-Saxon, and Other do better than the E.L.L. students on assessments. The perception teachers have about the performance of E.L.L. students on assessments is not a positive one. Looking at the results of the reading scores, teachers' perceptions of the performance E.L.L. is not based on the district data. According to the data provided by the district, E.L.L. students are competitive

in their reading scores with those of the regular students.

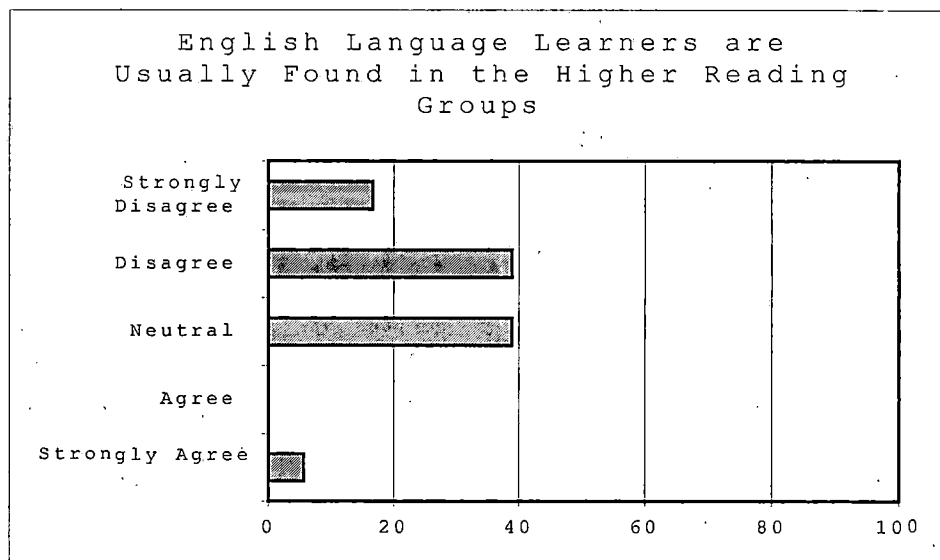
Table 14. Average Standardized Reading Achievement Scores for San Jacinto Elementary



The only teacher that agreed that E.L.L. students perform as well on assessments as the regular students, was the one who had the highest scores for the English Language Learners. If the teacher believes that the students have the ability to have higher scores, then that may be exactly what will happen.

9) E.L.L. students are usually found in the higher reading groups.

Table 15. English Language Learners are Usually Found in the Higher Reading Groups

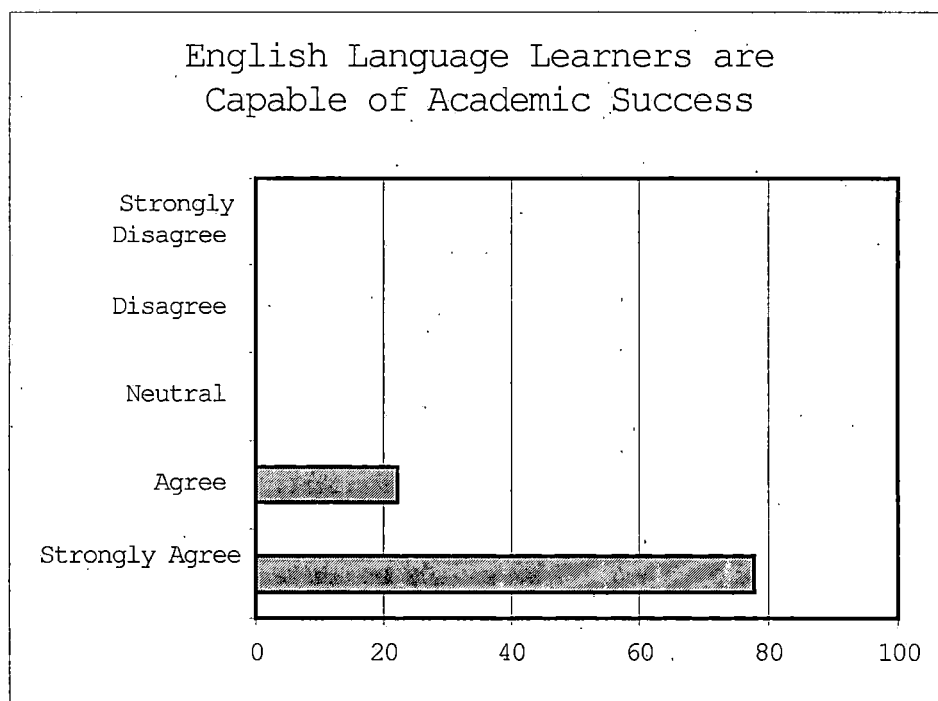


Fifty-six percent of the respondents strongly disagree or disagree that E.L.L. students are usually found in the higher reading groups. Although they have a variety of academic abilities, reading is not one of them. Only one teacher strongly agreed that E.L.L. students are usually found in the higher reading groups. If the teachers of E.L.L. students do not believe that they are capable of being in the higher reading groups, then they never will be. Students will achieve at the level that they are expected to achieve. If the level of expectation is raised and teaching strategies change then the level of achievement will improve. It can be problematic if these

teachers do not visualize E.L.L.'s in the higher reading groups. Their opportunity to be academically challenged may not be attainable. The question, "Why are they not in the higher reading groups?" rises when analyzing this data.

10) E.L.L. students are capable of academic success. Ninety-four percent strongly agreed with this statement. This can lead one to believe that the teachers believe that E.L.L. students are capable of academic success.

Table 16. English Language Learners are Capable of Academic Success.



In looking at the pattern of responses, it is noted that there seems to be a positive outlook on E.L.L. students because the teachers believe that they have a wide variety of academic abilities. It also seems that the teachers believe that E.L.L. students are capable of academic success. Although the students have various abilities, they are usually not found in the higher reading groups and struggle in reading. One of the various abilities that they do have is not reading. E.L.L. students have a wide variety of abilities but one of them is not doing well on the standardized tests. It seems contradictory that E.L.L. students are capable of success, yet they are faces are not pictured with those who are considered to be the successful ones. One can be a bit confused when analyzing the data because it seems as though the respondents want to be politically correct and say that they believe that all children can learn and be successful. E.L.L. students are considered to be part of that group of children that is capable of success. So, "What is the problem with E.L.L. students?" Are they not succeeding because they do not want to? Are they not in the higher reading groups because they do not work hard enough? Do they not score as well as regular students because they do not take the test

seriously? Is it perhaps that E.L.L. students do not value education?

If indeed E.L.L. students have a wide variety of abilities, "When do those abilities flourish? In what type of setting are those wide range of abilities expressed and exposed? If E.L.L. students are capable of success, in what type of classroom and with what type of teacher are the E.L.L. students going to maximize their potential?

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION

#### Interpretation

The number of immigrants continues to grow in the United States. The number of Hispanics in this country also continues to go up. There is and will continue to be a high demand for teachers who are trained on how to teach E.L.L. students. Teacher's perceptions of E.L.L.'s academic abilities will play a vital role in their education. The perceptions of teachers will play either a positive or negative role in the shaping of current and future communities. Teacher expectations are powerful in the prediction of success or failure for English Language Learners. In this study, teachers perceived that E.L.L. students were doing far worse in reading achievement than the other sub groups of students. The reality was that they were scoring at about the same rate as all the other sub groups. In some cases the scores of E.L.L students were slightly higher or slightly lower. Positive expectations on behalf of the teacher can only lead to positive academic achievement. Negative expectations on behalf of the teacher will not encourage success but rather to accept and expect failure. Teacher expectation



studies should be looked at in order to understand the impact of preconceived notions on behalf of the teacher toward the student. Failure to acknowledge that teacher expectations are essential in the rate of academic success or failure of a student can disable education. The teacher should not be alone in this process. The school, parents, and community also play crucial roles in the success or failure of a child. Teachers do have the power to change a child's life in multiple ways. If the teacher has a positive attitude, promotes all races, accepts all differences, and celebrates children's abilities, then he/she has made a positive contribution to the world. I

### Conclusion

Prior to 1948, research on teacher expectations attributed student failure to the individual or to the family. The teacher was nowhere in the picture in the analysis of failure of the student. Teacher perceptions, attitudes, and preconceived notions were not a consideration. Yet, if the student was successful, the success was attributed entirely to the teacher.

In the early research, Merton coined the term "self-fulfilling prophecy" and after that there was a wave

of research looking at teacher expectations as a possible contributor to the success or failure of students.

Recent research acknowledges that teacher expectations are highly influential in the rate of academic achievement. It was also noted that teachers significantly underestimate the achievement gains for Mexican-American students. The focus of most education is the education of the individual student instead of his or her ethnic group (Garcia, 1988, p. 14). It also takes into consideration other factors such as parental involvement, school support, school climate, teacher training, school leadership. According to Nieto, "blaming the teacher, or "teacher bashing", provides a convenient outlet for complex problems, but fails to take into account the fact that teachers function within contexts in which they usually have little power" (Nieto, 1992, p. 46).

Teachers from a students' racial, cultural, and ethnic background can make a significant contribution to the student as well as the school. Those teachers have the opportunities to bring their own experiences into perspective creating an enriching environment for the students. But it can be problematic when the teacher is viewed as a representative of his/her entire racial, ethnic, and linguistic group. Not only are they expected

to be the role models for the students, but they are also increasingly called on to solve problems of cultural misunderstanding, and to translate letters, visit homes, begin school's multicultural committees and so on-usually with no extra compensation or recognition (Nieto, 1992, p. 330). This situation is uncomfortable and unfair to teachers. The school has a responsibility to hire a variety of ethnic backgrounds so that the schools staff is representative of the clients it serves. Teachers who are appointed to be the representative of their entire race end up working more and burning out quickly because they are trying to be in charge of too many assignments.

There are always going to be insensitive and racist teacher with low expectations particularly for students of color. Placing the teacher as the center of student achievement also shifts the blame to those teachers who work hard everyday to help their students become productive members of society. The term "teacher expectations" does not include, parents, school, and state.

Research on teacher expectations is controversial. First of all, the term is problematic because it seems to place the sole responsibility of the success or failure for the student on the teacher. Most people should be well

aware that it takes an entire cohort of people to educate and raise a child. Parents, school, and teachers become a part of the team that is responsible for the success of the child.

Low expectations reflect the expectations of society as well. The expectations of society for Mexican-American students are going to play an important role in the success for those students. A prime example of that is the disbelief that occurred at Garfield High School. Garfield High School is a predominantly Latino High School situated in the middle of East Los Angeles. High numbers of students in Advanced Placement Math classes of Jaime Escalante were passing the A.P. Calculus Exam. The numbers were so high the first time they took the exam that the ETS made them take the test over again. Society, represented by the testing company did not believe that particular group of students had passed the A.P. Calculus Exam. They retook the test in front of the testing company and the number of students who passed was the same. If this happened in Beverly Hills, the test scores would never have been questioned. The number of students in Jaime Escalante's Calculus classes passing the A.P. exam continued to grow throughout the years. Years later, George Bush visited Garfield High School as a part of his

presidential campaign. One would think that the presidential candidate would talk to high school students about the importance of striving for a college education. He told the largely Mexican-American student body that "we need people to build our buildings...people who do the hard physical work for our society" (as cited in Garcia, 1988, p. 9). This was a further humiliation to these students and their community. What kind of a message did those students get from a man who would soon be in charge of the entire country? Now, why did he say that to the large Mexican-American student body? What is the role of Mexican-Americans in this country according to Bush? George Bush would not have said that to the student body at Beverly Hills High School. The parents in Beverly Hills would've been outraged at the message delivered. So, why was it okay for him to say that in the high school situated in the middle of East Los Angeles.

#### Implications

The teachers in this study for the most part believe ELL students struggle in reading, are faced with many academic challenges, require more time in terms of the lessons that are planned for them, do not do well on standardized tests, do not perform as well on assessments,

and are usually not found in the higher reading groups. With all of those negative perceptions in mind, they also believe E.L.L. students have a wide variety of abilities and they are capable of academic success. The perceptions contradict each other. What can be done to resolve or mediate these negative perceptions and contradictions?

The teachers that participated in this study are working in a school with approximately 600 students. Of those 600 students, 65.2% are Latino/a. Of those 600 students, 40% of them receive services for English Language Learners. In terms of the high number of ELL students that exist at this particular school site, it is very important to make note of the type of services and support these students are receiving. The type of teacher training that is provided for their teachers must also be considered as a possible solution to the problem.

When educators are not familiar with a particular topic, they simply gather literature and learn about it in that way. In terms of becoming familiar with a particular culture, the method of gaining knowledge about that culture is not the same as picking up a book and reading about it. In order for teachers to become more knowledgeable, aware, and more sensitive to a culture they must spend time with the people of that culture. Time must

be spent engaged in conversation with the persons of the culture you would like to learn more about. The teacher has to take on the role of an anthropologist who makes observations and bases the answers to his/her questions on those observations. One cannot become an expert on the Mexican-American family by watching the stereotypes displayed on television, buying a "burrito" in the local Mexican restaurant, or by dressing-up in a folklore dress for the sixteenth of September or for Cinco de Mayo. Teachers must invest energy into learning more about the experiences of the children that come into to their classrooms on a daily basis. Students spend more time with the teacher in a weekday, than they do with their parents. A student will spend approximately 180 school days with their teacher. Those 180 school days will affect the child's life in multiple ways forever. It is worth the effort to try to better understand the students' realities instead of blaming them or their parents for their lack of success in the classroom.

Expectation is important in the rate of success or failure in a child's life. Expecting that every child in your class will succeed lead to more academic achievement. There needs to be and understanding that every child has a "zone of proximal development" which can be maximized only

if the teacher is willing to take the time to plan lessons that reflect the students' abilities and opportunities to learn.

The teacher that wants to be successful must set aside all of the baggage that many children bring to school with them. By setting aside all of the "deficits" of the student, the teacher can focus on what the child has instead of what the student does not have. Teachers must ask themselves, "How am I going to plan my lessons to make the most of the time my students will spend with me? "What can I do to impact this child in a positive way?" How can I maximize this student's potential? How am I going to go about learning more in a genuine way about his/her culture? Along with analyzing our teaching practices in the classroom other specific types of things need to take place.

August and Hakuta looked for schools that were servicing high numbers of minority students and were experiencing success. They wanted to find schools that were successful in order to look at what types of programs, strategies, planning, and skills they were practicing. They were interested in finding out what common elements were found in the schools where E.L.L. students made significant academic achievement. August and



Hakuta found common elements at these schools. The teachers at those schools perceived that they were motivating and knowledgeable. These teachers shared their experiences with other teachers and formed networks to support each other. Nobody felt that they were fighting a battle all alone. These teachers were highly involved in professional development to learn more about innovations in education. There was a strong belief on the importance of the school and home communication process. The teachers served as advocates for their students and rejected the notion that their students were intellectually or academically disadvantaged (August & Hakuta, 1998).

Teachers that have low expectations will receive a low level of results of academic achievement. Teachers who perceive that students who have language and cultural differences are incapable of high-quality work are doing a disservice to society. Teachers need to raise their levels of expectation and standards for all students. In the end, what will be the most valuable for every student is the relationship that he/she has with his/her teachers. Those positive relationships have the power to motivate and inspire.

### Limitations to the Study

The attitudinal questionnaire was given to twenty teachers at the same school site. It would've been interesting to carry out this same study throughout to the other elementary schools of the school district. This would've provided an opportunity to see a larger sample of answers and test scores. Although the demographic composition of the other schools is not the same as the school that was used for the study, there are E.L.L. students in those other schools. Only one of the three other schools has almost the same number of ELL students, teachers, compensatory programs, and SAT 9 scores.

It would be ideal to carry out this study in a school district with similar demographics. It would be very informative to see if there are similar trends in perceptions in other school districts. One can get more extensive results if there is a bigger number of participants in the study. Questionnaires are wonderful tools to use for a study because they are simple and quick to fill out. The only problem comes with the rate of return of the questionnaires. It took almost two weeks before I received most of them back. I wrote a very brief summary of the purpose of the study. The biggest concern on the part of the participants was the issue of

confidentiality. They wanted to make sure their name was not going to be tied to the results. They were assured that the results would be chunked and no one teacher would be scrutinized. Most of the participants were comfortable filling out the questionnaire and were actually interested in the purpose of the study. All of the returned questionnaires were returned completely filled out. Only two questionnaires were not returned. The two participants that did not return them were going off track soon after the questionnaire was handed out. They probably just forgot to return them in the mist of all their responsibilities right before track off. I found that the best time to pass out the questionnaire was during a time when there was not as much pressure for the teachers in other arenas. Teachers are so overwhelmed with their duties and responsibilities that adding another thing to their list of things to do would not be the best idea. I chose a time when teachers were rested and content. The best time proved to be immediately after the Winter break.

APPENDIX  
TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

## Teacher Questionnaire

This is a questionnaire for a Master's Project that I am currently working on at Cal State San Bernardino. Please help me by answering these questions to the best of your ability. Some of the questions on this survey ask you to compare English Language Learners with students that are fluent in English or regular students. E.L.L. students are those that have been tested by the school or district and qualify for English Language Development services. For the purpose of this survey, students all English Language Learners will be put on the same category regardless of their level of English development. Regular students are those students that were never classified as an English Language Learner. As you answer your questions, think of the students' characteristics and attributes and how you perceive their academic achievement. I greatly appreciate your time and effort. Thank you for your cooperation.

### Demographic Data

1. How many years have you been teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Are you bilingual? \_\_\_\_\_  
If yes, in what language? \_\_\_\_\_  
How fluent are you?  
Somewhat \_\_\_\_\_ Very fluent \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do you have E.L.L. students in your classroom? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many E.L.L. students are enrolled in your class? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many students in total are enrolled in your class? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Circle the type of credential you currently hold:  
CLAD    BCLAD    Out of State    Ryan    Basic Credential
7. Do you have or are working on the following:  
CLAD    BCLAD    ELD    ESL
8. What grade do you teach?  
First        Second        Third        Fourth

Directions:

Please answer the following questions by rating your answer on a scale of 1 through 5.

1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

9.	ELL students are capable of academic success.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	ELL students struggle in reading.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	ELL students need extra help in most areas.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	ELL students are faced with many academic challenges.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	ELL students are motivated to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	ELL students are incapable of academic success.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Lessons for ELL students require more preparation on the part of the teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	ELL students are eager to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	ELL students tend to give up easily when given a difficult task.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	ELL students do not participate in class.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	ELL students are excited about learning.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	ELL students have a wide variety of academic abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	ELL students are usually behind in most academic areas.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	ELL students do well on standardized tests.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	ELL students can attain academic functional skills.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	ELL students perform as well on assessments as the regular students.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	ELL students that are instructed appropriately and are accommodated, do well academically.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	ELL students that are usually found in the higher reading groups.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	ELL students volunteer to be leaders.	1	2	3	4	5

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